Earth 103 Food Systems

Good morning. You can't talk about food supply without talking about population. When many of you were born, global population stood at about 5 billion people. By the middle part of this century, population will rise to about 9 billion people. And that's an astonishing increase, and the increase in population will surely impact food supply.

It's really hard standing here in the middle of a cornfield in rural Pennsylvania to think that there are hungry people everywhere, and there are hungry people just a few miles away from where I'm standing. The main issue with food supply that we'll discuss in this module is how climate change will impact it into the middle part of the century. And there's nowhere more devastating than sub-Saharan Africa, where drought and increased temperature will impact food supply and the ability of countries to feed people.

The main thing that I really worry about with food supply is the ethical issue. The countries that are emitting the most CO2 into the atmosphere-- the United States in particular-- is a country that can feed its people if it tries to, whereas those countries that are not emitting as much CO2 into the atmosphere are the countries that are going to be impacted by food supply issues in the most devastating way into the middle part of this century.